

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 and 54-67 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment cancels non-elected claims 54-67 without prejudice. Thus, claims 1-40 remain pending for consideration upon entry of the instant amendment.

Applicants respectfully reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended to remove the reference numerals from the claim.

The Office Action requires under 35 U.S.C. §121 restriction between the process of Group I (claims 1-40) and the devices of Group II (claims 54-67).

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has applied an incorrect standard in restricting the present application. Specifically, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is a national stage entry application of International Application No. PCT/EP03/03884. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present application can only properly be restricted according to PCT Rule 13.1.

None-the-less, and merely in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants elect, with traverse, the invention of Group I, which includes claims 1-40.

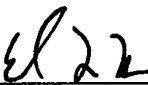
Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-40 and 54-67 relate to a single general inventive concept as required by PCT Rule 13.1 and, as such, search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the Requirement for Restriction with regard to non-elected Group II.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for examination. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and passage of this application to allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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